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It is a fact, worthy of remark, that one of the five regiments is composed entirely of blacks, which proves that they are now of considerable consequence, or are likely to be so, if the revolution succeeds.

Supposing this account to be somewhat favourable to the patriots, as it probably is, still it appears that they have among them no inconsiderable concert, prudence, and liberality of views. They seem to take advantage of circumstances with promptness and address, and to use every means of husbanding and multiplying their resources. But whatever be their talents or courage, it is evident that their limited resources render their fate dependent on the disposition of the other parts of Brazil.

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**ART. XII.** *Sancho, or the Proverbialist.* By J. W. Cunningham, Vicar of Harrow. Boston, Wells & Lilly, 1817.

AUTHORS in our day have certainly very little right to complain of the patience of their readers; they meet with much of that charity that believeth all things, hopeth all things, is not easily provoked. When a man has once acquired popular favour, or even caught the popular eye, with whatever inclination it looks on him, the trade of authorship becomes immediately profitable. His first work, if it meet with success, whether from merit or caprice, is a recommendation for all that follow, however indifferent. A good beginning is like a letter of introduction, and of old it had no longer efficacy than those missions have in England, where they entitle a man to one dinner, and after that leave him to make his way by his good behaviour; but of late, readers have adopted the hospitality of our southern planters, with whom a letter operates as a consignment for the season. This readiness to be pleased, though an excellent quality of the heart, marks but an indifferent state of taste; and is one of the many proofs of an opinion which we hold, that an extensive diffusion of the elements of literature is unfavourable to its eminence. When education was hard to be obtained, and depended altogether on individual exertion, it naturally fell to the lot of the most powerful minds alone. An author had not then his choice of writing for the vulgar or the learned, for then the vulgar could not read; and if he hoped that his book

should be bought, it was necessary it should be suited to intellects of the higher order. No temptations then existed that could produce such books as half the poetry, and more than half the novels of our time; alas, there were no sentimental chamber-maids or romantick cooks; children were taught only useful trades or manly exercises, and the race of idlers, that will exist under every form of society, instead of poisoning their minds for want of employment, pursued other sports, that at least gave health to the body. But since every one can read, literature is in great demand, and like every other commodity, the greater the demand for it, the worse is its quality. An author who writes for money, which is the principal or secondary motive with most of them, can no more afford now to sell pure literature, than a farmer can to sell milk at the market price, while all his neighbours get as much for milk and water. The number of the half learned is so much increased beyond that of the scholars, that books, which must always accommodate themselves to their readers, have been kindly qualified to the taste of the lowest capacity. There are indeed, and always will be, a few gentlemen authors, who can still afford to write well, preferring the approbation of the few to the applause of the many, and content on the score of gain, if their books do not run them in debt; but of these the number will be very small, while that of the calculating class seems, under the auspices of Mr. Lancaster and Dr. Bell, to be capable of an almost indefinite extension. When all men, women, and children, Christian and heathen, shall be taught their letters, we may almost believe with St. John, “the world would not contain the books that should be written.”—But though literature suffer by this process, we cannot reasonably complain, while so much is effected by it for religion, and morals, and civil liberty. The education of all classes operates like an agrarian law; and if it leaves us but a moderate share of literary wealth, it at least gives us the satisfaction of knowing, that few are very poor. While all have enough to make them free and happy, the luxuries we lose are of little moment; he must have little taste, and less benevolence, who would confine in his pleasure-grounds the streams that might give plenty and verdure to the humblest and farthest fields his eye can reach. It is our duty and pleasure as men, to do all that we can for the general diffusion of knowledge and happiness; but we fear that much which we love and admire, would necessarily be sacrificed to procure that state of things

most favourable to the views of the philanthropist. In a perfect state of society, we apprehend that mere men of letters, and even our reviewing selves, would be found almost superfluous ; at least the times, when those idle callings have most flourished, were certainly not the happiest or the best. But after all, we are so well convinced of the impracticability of all the schemes of improvement which would thus reduce our value in the community, that we assure our readers we will make no attempt to prevent their being as well informed and as happy as they will.

We were led to think what we have here set down, by reading "*Sancho, or the Proverbialist* ;" which is a very fair example of the most indifferent kind of writing, by a man confessedly of considerable talent. Mr. Cunningham gained some reputation by his first work, and really deserved it ;—it was a work of feeling, simplicity, and morality, with some poetry, and no cant. His succeeding works (we speak not of his verse) have had little to recommend them, except their general moral tendency, and they have become tinged with too much of the show of religion. The author is unwearied in his encomiums on Mother Church, and though he nowhere breaks into open intolerance, there are abundance of covert censures of the dissenters. These occur so frequently and unnecessarily, and seem at times so inconsistent with the Catholick and tender spirit he evinces on other occasions, that we are almost inclined to suspect the motive of such an uneasy attachment to the established worship. In page 129 of this book he speaks, with a sly sort of applause, of a person, who "praised the church, though he had only a poor vicarage ;" we have no doubt this was meant to remind the reader of the Vicar of Harrow, and furthermore we half suspect the fact is, that he himself praises the church, *because* he is but a poor vicar ; not that the hope of spiritual preferment is the cause of his loving the church, but if he were better provided for, we really think his love would be quite as fervent, and much more quiet. But independent of all interested views, such remarks are neither useful nor becoming. Moral precepts are never thrown away, however light the occasion on which they are introduced ; the most playful breeze may scatter upon good ground some of the seeds of good living. Such precepts can hardly be too often repeated, or too familiarly connected with our most ordinary and most interesting pursuits—let them be introduced in any manner,

and they may do good ; they may revive a forgotten principle, or at least strengthen a good habit. But we should with more caution recommend the forms of religion on every occasion, and especially those points of belief or modes of worship, about which men may honestly differ ; we cannot hope to change a settled opinion, or gain a convert to a sect by a passing encomium. Such an attempt, unless seriously and thoroughly made, will produce more doubt than conviction, more disgust on one side than attachment on the other. Mr. Cunningham therefore may be very honest in this course, but we cannot think him judicious. To his piety and morality, however, there can be no objection. They are both of the purest and most rational kind.

The “ World without Souls ” interested us from the novelty of the idea, and the touching simplicity with which the few characters are described by the author, and describe themselves ; there was a peculiar vein of subdued melancholy, a sad good feeling in the father, and an ingenuous but shrewd simplicity in Gustavus, that took strong hold of the heart. The incidents were nothing, but the characters were such as made a romance of the most common occurrences. The “ Velvet Cushion,” which followed, was little more than a vindication of the tenets of the church, and looked too much like a hint to the lords spiritual, for the author’s benefit, to be very interesting to others. The book now before us is, perhaps, still less attractive ; there is in it little addressed to the feelings or the understanding ; it is a simple story of a perverse school-boy and his two aunts ; one of whom, old and ill favoured, loved proverbs ; and the other, young and comely, loved the Bible and the church ; and both agreed in loving little Sancho. The design of the work is, as may be conjectured from the title, to prove the fallacy of proverbs ; and we should have taken it without hesitation for a good little book for children, and given the author praise for devoting his time to a humble, though very useful object, had it not contained many reflections in a manner so mature, and on subjects of such a nature, as made us suspect it might after all be meant for grown people. Mr. Cunningham has been praised for simplicity, and he seems, in endeavouring to support that reputation, to have fallen into the error, that to be simple is to be praiseworthy without regard to the value of the subject or the matter. To a certain extent this is true, for if a man will talk or write nonsense,

it cannot be denied he had better do it as simply as possible, and the same is true when he writes sensibly, and even sublimely. But simplicity, as it is commonly understood, is only a quality of style, and can give no value to that, which has not some other recommendation; it prevents what is merely worthless from being ridiculous, and gives, or rather leaves to grand and touching thoughts, their native strength and beauty; but farther than this negative value, it is not to be sought or praised. There is indeed a simplicity of thought very different from all this, a direct communication from heart to heart, that is the effect of the most refined cultivation, and as almost independent of manner; a simplicity like that of Flaxman's exquisite drawings for sculpture, the result of consummate skill, though apparently so little laboured as to seem within the reach of all. Of this, both the former books of Mr. Cunningham contained some specimens, in the latter it was the only beauty, and in the former it was mixed with much that approached the moral sublime. But all this has evaporated before we come to Sancho; the materials of which are briefly these;—Sancho, when a little boy, was sent to school, and directed by his ugly aunt to regulate all his actions by this maxim;—"Take care of Number One"—which he obeyed to the letter, and in consequence became greedy, and for this he was plundered and beaten by his schoolmates, and physicked by the doctor; he became cruel, and was whipt; he became a thief, and was dismissed from school; after which he went to another, fortified with this auxiliary; "Do at Rome as they do at Rome"—by the help of this, he was merely hated and despised; he then with a still stronger reinforcement of proverbs, on the subjects of Religion, Character, and Friends, entered the university, where he remained with much the same success, until his aunt died, and left her fortune to his sister instead of Sancho. At this time he was deeply confirmed in habits of selfishness, infidelity, envy, and discontent; in a word, a thoroughly bad man—at home however he meets a clergyman, who tells him a story of a penitent young female, and his remaining aunt restores the fortune he had lost, when suddenly by the operation of these two marvellous facts, he becomes good, religious, and contented; loves his aunt Rachel, and amuses his old age by burning his infidel books. If our readers cannot see here materials enough for a tale of nearly two hundred pages, they have only to imagine them cruelly stretched and eked out

with old stories, and gratuitous dissertations about the Church of England and English universities, all which contain not a valuable remark or a new truth. We do not see one good purpose that can be answered by such a book—the publick certainly get nothing by it, for it is not calculated to amuse or do good to any one; it is too childish for men, and unintelligible to children. We can give the author no more credit for the design than for the execution; he could not surely suppose the world needed a refutation of proverbs like those he has set forth and abused; had he chosen more specious maxims for the object of his ridicule, some good effect might have been produced; there are, no doubt, many false rules of conduct in the form of proverbs, that may deceive the unwary, but who can fear such as “Take care of Number one”—“Do at Rome as they do at Rome”—“Never too late to repent”—“The nearer to church the farther from God, &c.?” We know not what influence such sayings may have in England, but we believe the author could hardly find a man who regulates a single action of his life by them; and certainly, if there be such a man, he will no more change his opinion by reading this book, than we should be deterred from robbing birds’ nests, or playing marbles on a Sunday, by the life and death of King Pippin.

If it were worth while to remark other faults in such a book, we might mention one common to many good novels, as well as bad ones, that when the moral of the story requires a reformation in the hero, it is brought about without any sufficient cause, and in a period quite inadequate to correct rooted habits of vice.



**ART. XIII.** *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, comprising three voyages round the world, together with a voyage of survey and discovery in the Pacifick Ocean and Oriental Islands. By Amasa Delano. Boston, printed by E. G. House, 1817.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the many obvious incitements to book-making, which are apparent to us, we cannot help sometimes falling into conjectures about the motives, which could have lead to the publication of many of the works that appear. To make a book of five or six hundred pages, is no small matter after all, let its subject and merits be what they may. And